

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 8 have been amended. The amendments to claim 8 are only to improve its form without narrowing its scope. Support for the amendment to claim 1 can be found at least in FIGs. 14 to 15 and the accompanying text. Claims 1-20 are now pending in this application.

Allowable subject matter

Applicants appreciate the indication that claims 8-20 are allowed.

Double Patenting

Claims 1-6 stand rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1, 6, 28, 29 and 30 of U.S. Patent No. 6,969,183 (“’183 patent”). Without conceding the propriety of the above double patenting rejection, and in order to further prosecution, a Terminal Disclaimer with respect to the ‘183 patent is being filed herewith under 37 C.F.R. 1.321(c). Accordingly, applicants respectfully submit that the obvious-type double patenting rejection has been overcome and respectfully request that the rejection of claims 1-6 be withdrawn.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103

Claims 1 and 2 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,938,319 to Hege (hereafter “Hege”). Claims 3-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hege. Claim 7 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hege in view of JP 60022541 A to Kudo (hereafter “Kudo”). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for at least the following reasons.

Independent claim 1, as amended, recites “an information display unit that controls the reflection type digital light reflector, and that displays information using a contrast between the ON state light and the OFF state light reflected from the reflection type digital light deflector on the road surface via the light irradiation unit, the information is displayed on the road surface within a main light distribution pattern provided by the light irradiation unit.” Hege and Kudo fail to disclose or suggest at least this feature of claim 1.

Hege discloses a system with a light source 10, and a reflector 12 which guides light to a deflecting device 18 with a large number of individual reflecting elements 22 (abstract). Hege discloses a controller 30 arranged to control the reflecting elements 22 to change characteristics of the light beam issuing from the lighting device (abstract).

In contrast to claim 1, however, Hege does not disclose “an information display unit that controls the reflection type digital light reflector, and that *displays information* using a contrast between the ON state light and the OFF state light reflected from the reflection type digital light deflector *on the road surface* via the light irradiation unit.” Rather, the controller 30 of Hege merely controls the reflecting elements 22 to change the road illumination according to certain driving parameters. Hege does not disclose the controller 30 controlling the reflecting elements 22 to display information on a road surface.

Moreover, the feature of claim 1 where “the information is displayed on the road surface within a main light distribution pattern provided by the light irradiation unit” would not have been obvious to one skilled in the art in view of Hege and Kudo. Kudo discloses projecting characters on a road surface by a beam of light from a lamp 9 passing through a character plate 10. Kudo, however, discloses that the image from the light and plate 10 should be projected immediately before the front wheels in a beam B3 (See abstract, and FIG. 1). Thus, the information would not be within the main light distribution pattern provided by beams B1 and B2 (See FIG. 1). Thus, even if Hege were modified according to the teachings of Kudo to display information on the road, the combination would not have all the features of claim 1, because Kudo teaches away from displaying information on the road within the main light distribution pattern, and suggests the information should be displayed away from the main light distribution pattern.

Moreover, Hege and Kudo fail to realize the advantages of the claimed invention whereby the driver may view the information by simply viewing the main light distribution pattern. According to the teachings of Kudo, a driver would need to look away from the main light distribution pattern to view the information, raising safety concerns.

The dependent claims are patentable for at least the same reasons as their respective independent claims, as well as for further patentable features recited therein.

Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check or credit card payment form being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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